

Annam - the Himalayan Superbird and Tirukkural!

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Tiruvalluvar is generally thought to be of Jaina religion

- The first four chapters of his work, praising Theerthankarar
- His strict vegetarianism
 - He does not even approve of meat consumption given as alms in the Bhiksha vessel, a practice of Buddhist monks.
- Abstinence from alcohol
- Importance given to the Ascetics
- Impermanence of Life and his preaching of equality among castes.

Annam - the Himalayan Superbird and Tirukkural

- India is a unique civilization in the World
 - Lots of time contemplating on soul and afterlife.
- Result is science of Yoga. Linguistics, especially Phonetics and the letter-order of Indic languages like Tamil and Sanskrit.
- Jainism emphasizes “Tavam” (Penance) for the emancipation of the human Soul.
- Older layers of religious thoughts begin to resurface in the form of Jainism and continue to develop such as idol worship and theory of Karma.
- Buddhism was born later from this environment of *Śramaṇism*.

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What is “The Bird” referred to in Kural 338?

- குடம்பை தனித்தொழியப் புள் பறந்தற்றே
உடம்பொடு உயிரிடை நட்பு
- *kuṭampai taṇittu oliyap pul parantarrē*
uṭampoṭu uyiriṭai naṭpu (Kural 338)
- Birds fly away, and leave the nest deserted bare;
Such is the short-lived friendship soul and body share.
- Translation by Dr. G. U. Pope

What is “The Bird” referred to in Kuṛaḷ 338?

Most likely, the bird in Kuṛaḷ 338 is *Hamsa/Anṇam*

- *anṇam* is the bar-headed geese visiting South India each Winter
- *anṇam* = hamsa in Sanskrit
- The ancients did not know where they come from and when and where they depart
- So an apt metaphor for the Soul in living beings.

Sangam poets wondered why *anṇam* do not lay eggs here or raise their young. Their nests are considered to be in the Himalayas (*Kalittokai, marutakkali*).



The bird in Kuṛaḷ 338 is Hamsa/*Ann̥am*

In the bowl entombed in Buddhist stupa,
the departed soul is 338 is Hamsa/*Ann̥am*
(the bar-headed geese)

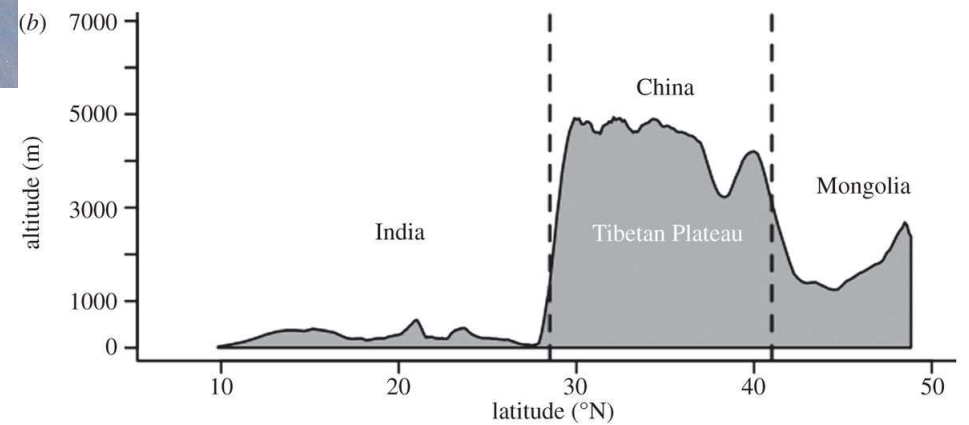
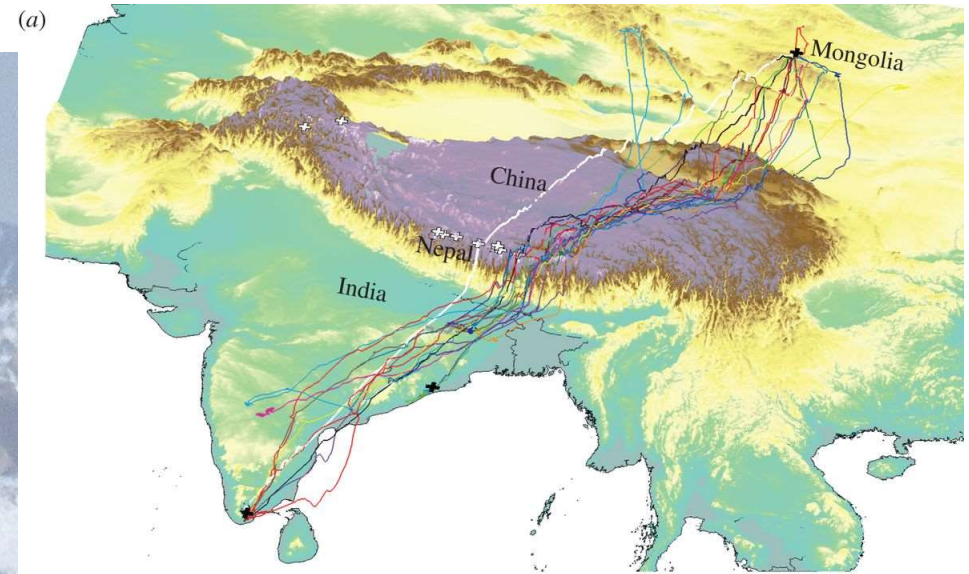


ann̥am bird representing Buddha's soul, Taxila, First century CE

Himalayan Superbird, Bar-headed Goose = Hamsa/Annam



Bar headed Geese crossing the mighty Himalayas



Elevation crossed over by Annam in their journey to south India twice a year

Anna uvama urupu : Dhvani with Hamsa/Annam

● In Tamil, there are many particles of comparison, *uvamai urupu*. Among them, Tiruvalluvar uses “*anna*” in two couplets dealing with the subject of love. There seems to be a hint suggesting the bird name, *annam*.

● *vāltal uyirkku annaḷ āyilai cātal*
atarku annaḷ nīnkum iṭattu (Kuraḷ 1124)

Life with my jewel is existence; Death it is her severance.

-- Here, life and death are compared to times of lovers either together or in separation.

-- The use of *annaḷ* is noteworthy.

● Another Tirukkuraḷ in the same pattern where *anna*, the comparative particle is used with the technique of suggestion to *annam* bird. It is a rarity that Tirukkuraḷ uses the same phrase, *uṭampoṭu uyiriṭai - naṭpu* in Kuraḷs 338 and 1122.

uṭampoṭu uyir-iṭai enna marru anna
maṭantaiyoṭu em-iṭai naṭpu (Kuraḷ 1122)

(Love between me and this lady is like bond between soul and body.)

Over Time, Artistic Embellishments on Annam

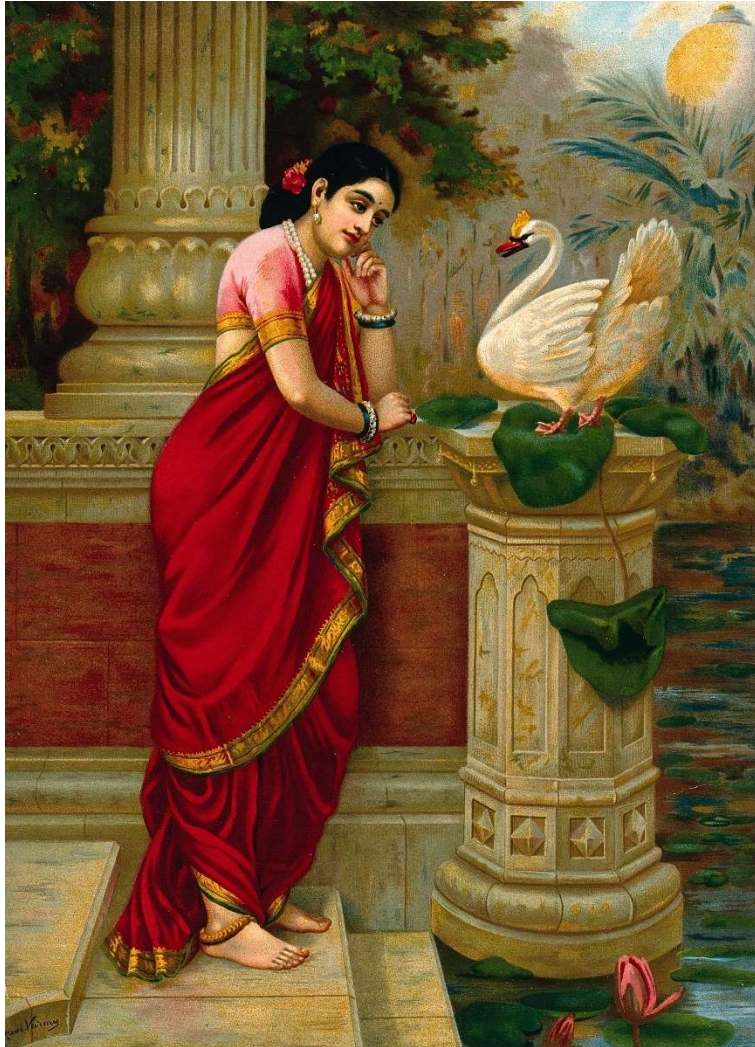


*Anna Vilakku – Hamsa Oil Lamp
Note the addition of peacock feather tail*



*A loving pair of Annam birds
– Their feathers are used in beds*

Europeans bringing Swans to zoos - Swans as Anṇam - Changes in 19th century Art



*Damayanti sends Hamsa as Messenger
Painting by Raja Ravi Varma*



*Saint Ramakrishna is Paramahansa
Sri Ramakrishna Math Logo in Calcutta*

Conclusion

- In Tamil, *aṇṇam* is the Himalayan migratory superbird.
- Jaina monks compiled a book of morals called *Nālaṭiyār*.
It mentions a powerful ability of the *aṇṇam*.
Let us try to emulate it.
- Learning has no limits; the learners' days are few.
If they would calmly reflect, diseases are also many.
Let them carefully learn what is essential,
making a good choice like the *aṇṇam* bird
which drinks the milk separating it from the water!

Thank You All.